



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

National Tourism Week is here and to help kick off the week I went to the Tonto Natural Bridge State Park, just outside of Payson, where the Arizona State Parks department was celebrating the 50th anniversary of State Parks in Arizona. Our State Park system was created to boost tourism in the state and 50 years later the relationship between our two organizations is thriving.

For National Tourism Week, Arizona will join hundreds of cities, states and travel-related businesses nationwide in recognizing the value of not only the nation's \$703 billion travel industry, but Arizona's \$17.5 billion travel industry as well. This industry is such a diverse and wide-ranging industry from transportation to the countless businesses found within our Arizona communities, such as hotels, restaurants, museums, zoos, and parks that so little is left unaffected by the tremendous economic impact tourism brings to the Grand Canyon State.

In 2005, Arizona tourism directly generated 168,000 travel-industry jobs and the indirect affects of this powerful industry impacts the livelihood of thousands more Arizonans. A record 31 million domestic and international overnight travelers experienced Arizona, spending \$17.5 billion throughout the state. This equates to visitation that is five times the size of Arizona's population base. The travel industry is pumping almost \$48 million directly into Arizona's economy everyday. In addition, direct travel spending in Arizona generates \$2.1 billion in local, state and federal tax revenues annually, which equates to \$850 per Arizona household.

National Tourism Week helps us celebrate the people who visit here, the workforce that provides service for them and the development created as a result. Please join us in recognizing tourism's remarkable contributions to Arizona communities.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Save the Date: The 27th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism

This year's 27th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism is July 11-13 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa. The program will be a dynamic mix of fresh industry information and resources that can help you plan for another year of marketing Arizona to audiences around the world. Breakout sessions and speakers will teach you how to take tourism marketing and promotion to a new level. With so many exciting opportunities happening nationally, the Arizona Office of Tourism and its association partners are committed to bringing you the most up-to-date tools available for tourism professionals. For more information and to register for the event, please visit www.aztourismconference.com.

Deadline to Submit for the Governor's Tourism Awards Fast Approaching

Each year, AOT coordinates the Governor's Tourism Awards, honoring individuals and organizations that have contributed noteworthy achievements over the past year to the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that have helped make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination. AOT invites you to review the award categories and guidelines at www.azot.gov to submit nominations of individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the tourism industry. The winners will be awarded at the Governor's Tourism Awards Luncheon on Thursday, July 12 at the 27th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism. All submissions must be received by **May 15, 2007**. Please visit the Governor's Conference on Tourism section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms.

Save the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops 2007

Grand Impressions workshops reach out to front-line tourism industry employees, conveying the importance of customer service in the travel industry and offering general information about Arizona attractions, enabling these employees to become ambassadors for the state. The 2007 workshops will feature the latest trends, research and information in customer service when working for and/or with older adults and Americans with disabilities. There will be a presentation by the Arizona Game and Fish Department on our state's Watchable Wildlife and an in-depth presentation on Arizona tourism attractions. There will also be an opportunity to tour the meeting locations. Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion and a complimentary lunch, along with free resource materials from presenters. The Grand Impression workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on first come, first service basis, as seating is limited. Please register soon. For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via e-mail at smartins@azot.gov.

May 30, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tim's Toyota Center (Formerly Prescott Valley Convention & Events Center)

3201 North Main Street

Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

Arizona Well Featured by International Tour Operators

Every year AOT's international representatives complete an inventory of all tour operators in the international market who offer destination packages to Arizona. Arizona is heavily featured in Germany with 93 tour operators offering the state as a vacation destination. Nine of these operators also target the Austrian market. This is an increase from 87 in 2006 and of this total, 35 are on-line operators. Escorted motor coach tours increased by 4.2 percent and guided motor bike tours by an impressive 99 percent from 21 to 40. Arizona product is offered in 101 programs by 90 tour operators in the United Kingdom, which is a 12 percent increase over the programs of 2006. Of this total, 34 are on-line operators with no printed brochure. The number of Canadian tour operators featuring Arizona increased in 2007 from 62 to 71, with 42 of these operators utilizing both print and on-line brochures, compared to 17 in 2006. The addition of direct non-stop air service from Mexico City to Phoenix has had a positive effect on Arizona's coverage in the Mexican market, with an additional four tour operators offering the state in 2007, bringing the total to 22. New for 2007 are the Benelux Countries of Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg. Although AOT does not have a designated office in this market, a product inventory was commissioned for 2007, which details the Arizona product featured in these three countries. In addition, for the first time, the Japanese product inventory will include both the written data and then scanned brochure pages. The product inventories are currently available for \$75 each. For more information please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or lbelonio@azot.gov

Trippin' with AOT

Arizona Takes Anaheim by Storm at International Pow Wow

Travel Industry Association's International Pow Wow is the travel industry's premier international marketplace and is the largest generator of travel to the United States. In just three days of intensive pre-scheduled appointments, more than 1,000 U.S. travel organizations and approximately 1,500 International and domestic buyers from more than 70 countries conducted business negotiations that resulted in the generation of more than \$3.5 billion in future US travel. AOT staff, as well as AOT's international representatives, was in attendance for a week of meetings, appointments, and networking. AOT had more than 100 prescheduled appointments with buyers from around the world who stopped by the Arizona booth to receive the latest product updates, discuss cooperative marketing opportunities and plan for the upcoming year. In addition, AOT participated in the Media Marketplace, where travel writers and journalists convened to receive the latest information on destinations around the U.S. For more information or to obtain a copy of the Pow Wow report contact Hylton Fothergill at (602) 364 3706 or hfothergill@azot.gov

Industry News

Arizona is a Big Hit at the James Beard Awards

As the International Culinary Tourism Symposium kicks off today at the Arizona Biltmore, Arizona's reputation as a world-class culinary destination received a major boost at last week's prestigious James Beard Foundation Awards in New York City. First and foremost, Nobuo Fukuda with Sea Saw in Scottsdale took home the top prize for Best Chef in the Southwest. He joins an esteemed group of past Arizona winners, including, Chris Bianco and Robert McGrath. In addition, "Food Trip with Todd English" won top honors in the Television Food Special category. AOT was joined by the Metropolitan Tucson and Greater Phoenix CVBs in sponsoring this incredible program and highlighting some of Arizona's unique culinary treasures. The James Beard Foundation Awards recognize outstanding achievement within the fine food and beverage industry. The Awards honor professionals including book authors, chefs, restaurateurs, winemakers, journalists, broadcasters, and restaurant and graphic designers in North America. To select the nominees and winners, independent volunteer panels of more than 600 food and beverage professionals from around the country vote on specific Award categories. For more information, visit www.jamesbeard.org.

Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association Announces One-of-a-Kind Online Auction

The AZHLA is launching the Discover Arizona online auction in conjunction with National Tourism Week. The auction features one-of-a-kind packages that will tempt and tantalize travelers from across the country. Available now for previews, www.discoverazvacations.com beckons guests to browse, bid and buy, with the auction officially beginning May 7th at 8:00 a.m., EDT; ending May 18th at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Proceeds from the auction event will support Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association's Education Foundation, which provides continuing education scholarships for current students and offers opportunities for high school students anxious to pursue a career in this growing field. Additionally, community relations programs and activities, which in turn support Arizona's hospitality community, will also be funded by this effort.

U.S. Modifying Exit Procedures

The Department of Homeland Security intends to integrate biometric exit procedures into the existing international visitor departure process. DHS says the change will make the process for departing the U.S. more convenient and accessible for international visitors. Effective immediately, international visitors will no longer be required to use the US-VISIT exit kiosks when they leave the U.S. International visitors who received a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Form I-94, Arrival and Departure Record, upon arrival must still return the form to an airline or ship representative when departing the U.S. DHS will take a number of other steps in the next year toward full implementation of biometric exit procedures at 14 airports. (*Special to TA; Modern Agent.com*)

California Doubles Spending for Tourism

California will double its spending on tourism promotion in the 2007-08 fiscal year to \$50 million, a record level that will catapult the state to the No. 2 spot, behind Hawaii, in state allocations for promoting tourism. The boost comes from legislation that went into effect on Jan. 1, allowing car-rental companies to collect 2.5 percent on every dollar spent on rentals at airports and hotels in California for the CTTC's coffers. In previous years, the CTTC, a nonprofit organization that handles the state's tourism marketing and is funded by the state and private industry, had a budget of between \$14 million and \$18 million. The agency is putting the finishing touches on its plans for the 2007-08 fiscal year. (*Travel Weekly.com, 5/8*)

LV Convention Center Getting \$890 Million Renovation

The Las Vegas Convention Center, for the first time in its nearly 50-year history, is getting an \$890 million makeover. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) Board of Directors approved the schematic design, timeline and budget for the proposed Enhancement Program for the Las Vegas Convention Center. "The overriding goal of the program is to enhance the customer experience for everyone using this facility," said Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO. "This design improves the functionality, usability and lifespan of our building for decades to come." The majority of the work is set to be complete by the end of 2010. Some meeting room renovation is scheduled for 2011 to accommodate trade show clients. As part of the program, the Las Vegas Convention Center will be adding a Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Substation and a Clark County Fire Station, becoming the only facility in the country with these on-site amenities. Both units will feature state-of-the-art equipment and personnel focused on homeland security to provide services to the convention center, surrounding neighborhood and parts of the Strip corridor. The Las Vegas Convention Center opened in 1959 with the World Congress of Flight and has hosted some of the largest trade shows in the world since. In 2006, the building housed more than 90 trade shows and is one of the busiest facilities in the country. *(Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole E-newsletter)*

Southwest May Add Intl. Service

In a few years, Southwest Airlines could make Philadelphia International Airport and Baltimore-Washington International Airport key connecting points for a type of customer it doesn't have now--travelers headed to Europe, its chief executive says. Southwest has never flown outside this country, so it is making a careful study of how to offer international service to Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, said CEO Gary C. Kelly. Southwest itself probably would not operate the international flights, instead forming a partnership with another airline with overseas experience, Kelly said. Both Philadelphia and Baltimore would be logical places for Southwest to "code-share" with an international carrier, meaning both airlines could sell single tickets that provide for connections between the two, Kelly said. *(Philadelphia Inquirer.com/Business)*